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FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9695
INFO RUEHHAH/AMEMBASSY ASHGABAT PRIORITY 2537
RUEHTA/AMEMBASSY ASTANA PRIORITY 0188
RUEHEK/AMEMBASSY BISHKEK PRIORITY 4234
RUEHLM/AMEMBASSY COLOMBO PRIORITY 1341
RUEHKA/AMEMBASSY DHAKA PRIORITY 2108
RUEHDBU/AMEMBASSY DUSHANBE PRIORITY
RUEHBUL/AMEMBASSY KABUL PRIORITY 7170
RUEHKKT/AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU PRIORITY 8404
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY 5764
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI PRIORITY 1100
RUEHNT/AMEMBASSY TASHKENT PRIORITY 3271
RUEHKP/AMCONSUL KARACHI PRIORITY 6325
RUEHLH/AMCONSUL LAHORE PRIORITY 2546
RUEHPW/AMCONSUL PESHAWAR PRIORITY 0899
RHMFSS/CDR USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL PRIORITY
RUEHNO/USMISSION USNATO PRIORITY 2451
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEKJCS/Joint STAFF WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY

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E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: PGOV PHUM KPAQ PK

SUBJECT: PAKISTAN MEDIA SITUATION: JUNE 7 UPDATE

REF: A. ISLAMABAD 2526

1B. ISLAMABAD 2494

11. (SBU) MEDIA PROTESTS IN NATIONAL ASSEMBLY. Evening of June 6, the Pakistani press corps that regularly covers the National Assembly began a "walk-out" from the Assembly to protest the new PEMRA ordinance regulating the electronic media (see para 2). According to a media contact, while Parliamentary Affairs Minister Sher Afgan Niazi and Minister of State for Information and Broadcasting Tariq Azeem attempted to talk to the journalists, a crew from PTV was filming non-journalists who had filled some of the seats in the press gallery. Several journalists returned to the press gallery and asked these non-journalists to leave. A "fight" or "altercation" ensued. PTV carried footage of the brawl on June 7. No one was arrested or detained. A media contact, however, told the Embassy that the National Assembly has rescinded all journalists' credentials and will issue new ones. The media contact's expectation is that re-issuance will be "selective."

12. (SBU) NEW PEMRA ORDINANCE WILL NOT GO INTO EFFECT PENDING INDEPENDENT COMMITTEE REVIEW. Prime Minister Aziz chaired a meeting late June 7 with other senior members of the government (Information Minister Durran, Information Secretary Anwar Mahmood and PML-Q Secretary General Mushahid

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Hussain) and leaders of major media associations All Pakistan Newspapers Society (APNS) and Pakistan Broadcasters Association (PBA). They agreed to form a six member committee to review the PEMRA ordinance. The Prime Minister also agreed that the government would not take any actions under the new ordinance until the committee reports to the Prime Minister. No date was set, but the committee agreed that a report should be submitted "in the shortest possible time."

¶3. (U) GOVERNMENT WITHDRAWS CASE AGAINST PROTEST BY 200 JOURNALISTS. Separately, Prime Minister Aziz ordered the withdrawal of a case that had been filed Monday against 200 journalists who had demonstrated in front of the Prime Minister's Secretariat on June 4.

¶4. (SBU) PRESIDENT MUSHARRAF was scheduled to address the nation tonight. This was published in several papers today. Media contacts told us this afternoon (June 7), however, that the President has "changed his mind" and "may address the nation in a few days."

BODDE